United Nations A/57/225

General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 July 2002

Original: English

Fifty-seventh session
Item 22 (d) of the provisional agenda*
Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The General Assembly, in its resolution 56/43, requested the Secretary-General to continue exploring possibilities for further enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, and decided to include the sub-item in the agenda of its fifty-seventh session. It also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-seventh session a report on cooperation between the two organizations.

The report outlines the cooperation that has taken place between the United Nations, bodies within the United Nations common system and the Council of Europe since the last report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly. The report identifies efforts made to develop practical cooperation at the working level, in the field, and in the areas of conflict prevention, peace-building, human rights and laws, development, the promotion of democracy, and prevention of terrorism, as well as overall cooperation between various Council of Europe and United Nations bodies and in their respective competencies.

* A/57/150/Rev.1.

** This document was submitted for processing after the established submission deadline owing to the delay in receipt of some United Nations system contributions.

02-49046 (E) 270802

I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly, after considering the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe (A/56/302), unanimously adopted resolution 56/43. In that resolution, the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to continue exploring, with the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, possibilities for further enhancement of cooperation, information exchange and coordination between the United Nations and the Council, and decided to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session the sub-item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe". The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-seventh session a report on cooperation between the two organizations in implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request.

II. Consultations and exchanges of information

2. Pursuant to the principles and intent of the cooperation agreement between the Council of Europe and the Secretariat of the United Nations, signed on 15 December 1951, and the follow-up agreement of 19 November 1971, the Arrangement on Cooperation and Liaison, between the secretariats of the United Nations and the Council, the two organizations have continued to cooperate on matters of mutual interest. Since the last report to the General Assembly (A/56/302), cooperation between the United Nations and the Council has continued through the observer status of the Council in the Assembly, direct contacts between the secretariats of the two organizations and between the Council and the bodies of the United Nations common system. The Secretaries-General of the two organizations have also exchanged formal communications on an array of issues. There have also been exchanges between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council.

III. Information received from the United Nations system

A. United Nations Headquarters

1. Department of Political Affairs

3. Representatives of the Council of Europe and the Department of Political Affairs held several meetings in the course of the year. The Department was invited to and participated in the high-level tripartite meeting held in Strasbourg on 8 February 2002. As the focal point for cooperation with regional organizations, the Department convened the working level meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations, which was held from 30 April to 2 May 2002, in which the Council and 17 other regional organizations participated actively. The main purpose of the meeting was to develop practical cooperation at the working level in the field of conflict prevention and peace-building, early warning preventive action, consultation and coordination, division of labour, socio-economic root causes of conflict and promotion of democracy and prevention of terrorism.

2. Department of Peacekeeping Operations

(a) United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

4. The United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) and the Council of Europe have cooperated and consulted on political, administrative and legal reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Bosnia and Herzegovina has resolutely supported the country's accession to the Council. The Special Representative met with the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Walter Schwimmer, on 7 February 2002 to discuss accession and post-accession assistance programmes as well as the post-accession requirements of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are 91 post-accession requirements and many of them pertain to the rule of law. UNMIBH, within the limits and duration of its mandate, will work towards helping Bosnia and Herzegovina in the fulfilment of these requirements.

5. UNMIBH, along with the Office of the High Representative, has been working with the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe on the

elaboration of the proposed draft law on establishing the State Information and Protection Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a view to ensuring that it conforms with European standards of policing and transparency and also meets the requirements of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Protocols thereto. This partnership with the Venice Commission greatly enhanced the draft law that was put forward to the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina for debate and approval. Representatives of UNMIBH and the Council met regularly to discuss the rule of law, human rights, pluralistic democracy and respect for minorities.

(b) United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

6. Collaboration between the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Council of Europe is continuing in all fields. The Secretary-General of the Council and his staff have shown preparedness to support UNMIK whenever this was required. The Council has given flexible technical support by providing examples of the highest quality legislative processes. The institution-building pillar and the Council have developed a relationship of cooperation on many levels, particularly in the realm of judicial and legal training, elections and the preparation of legislation. Where legislation has human rights implications, the Council has provided valuable assistance in the drafting of regulations at the request of UNMIK. The Council experts provided major technical input in the drafting of the Constitutional Framework.

7. The Council of Europe representation in the Joint Advisory Council on Legislative Matters, the main Kosovo body which provides UNMIK with consultative services on legislation matters, has provided input in a number of important pieces of legislation in the field of criminal justice. Council experts have also gone to Kosovo for periods of several weeks to work with Kosovo experts in the drafting and revision of criminal legislation. The Council readily supplies relevant legislation from member States and other technical documentation required in the preparation of legislation.

8. Collaboration between the Council of Europe and the Kosovo Judicial Institute is particularly strong, and takes the form of the co-organization of training seminars and workshops for judges, prosecutors and defence counsel. Joint symposiums and various round tables have been organized regarding domestic violence, to assess the level of assistance to victims. The Kosovo Law Centre has agreed with human rights experts from the Council to introduce human rights law courses into the University of Prishtine/Pristina Law Faculty Curriculum. Council experts have assisted the institution-building pillar in the formulation of legal documents, including the draft Broadcasting Regulation. In the field of human rights and awareness training, the Council has undertaken a capacity-building programme entitled "Roma under the Stability Pact", and facilitated the preparation and holding of a public awareness campaign on the Institution of Ombudsperson.

9. Cooperation between the institution-building pillar and the Council of Europe on electoral matters has been extensive over the past two-and-a-half years. The Kosovo-wide election on 17 November 2001 was monitored by the Council Election Observation Mission II. The Council also assessed electoral preparations in the field through numerous visits to UNMIK field offices and regional centres. Council of Europe observers visited polling stations on election day to ensure that the counting and the announcement of results were carried out objectively and transparently; their assessments highlighted the impartiality and effectiveness of procedures of the Central Election Commission. The Mission's reports and recommendations were welcomed by the institution-building pillar. With the upcoming municipal elections in Kosovo in autumn 2002, the institution-building pillar is prepared again to cooperate closely with the Council's observers. The Council has also played an advisory role in the management of the institution-building pillar-led Institute of Civil Administration. Until summer 2001, the Director of the Institute was seconded from the Council. It also seconded a police officer to the Kosovo Police Service School for a project on multimedia training developed jointly by the Council and the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute in Bucharest.

10. A one-year youth training course, which started in October 2001, is making an important contribution to the empowerment of young people and to the building of a democratic and participative society in Kosovo. It aims to enhance the dialogue between communities by providing space for the creation, development and evaluation of local youth projects and

introducing participants to European youth structures and programmes and concepts such as voluntary work.

11. From February to April 2002, the Council of Europe Directorate of Youth and Sport led and supported two brainstorming sessions on youth policy development for the staff of the Department of Youth. Staff members have also been invited to attend seminars in Strasbourg, France, and Budapest (Young Women Empowerment; Non-Formal Education; Monitoring Group for the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe; Working Table on Youth Stability Pact) and activities in other countries. The Directorate of Youth and Sport continues to support and promote interregional participation for Kosovo non-governmental organizations. Kosovo participated in the "Mosaic" Project, which exposed Kosovo cultural managers and European experts to new management concepts and tools.

12. UNMIK participates regularly in the meetings of the Education Committee and the Committee on Higher Education and Research. The Council of Europe, for its part, has provided expert contributions to the drafting of the Law on General and Higher Education, under a World Bank project (2000-2002).

13. In the Mitrovica region, the Council of Europe is actively involved in the promotion and dissemination of human rights education. The Council initiated a pilot project entitled "Human Rights Awareness Campaign" in September 2001. This is currently being implemented in 10 primary schools in Mitrovica. The Council also started another pilot project entitled "Youth Human Rights Capacity Building/Human Rights Clubs". It stems from the feedback from students and teachers participating in the first project and their desire to promote self-sustainable human rights awareness activities. This project is currently under way in two schools in the Mitrovica region.

14. The Council of Europe has paid close attention to the development of local government in Kosovo, from the drafting of initial legislation to the formation of the Association of Kosovo Municipalities. The members of the Association were invited to participate in an Economic Forum in Istanbul, Turkey, last year. In March 2002, the Brussels-based Congress of Regional and Local Authorities in Europe of the Council of Europe voted in favour of granting observer status to the Association of Kosovo Municipalities.

(c) United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

15. Cooperation between the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and the Council of Europe has been productive. Efforts by the two organizations, aimed at finding a comprehensive settlement for the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, and normalizing the situation in the Gali district, thereby facilitating the return of internally displaced persons are continuing.

16. A second seminar on State-legal aspects of the settlement of the conflict, to be held in Tbilisi in July 2001, was cancelled because of incidents on the ground. The political dialogue between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides was also interrupted. The session was to be a follow-up to the Pitsunda seminar of 12 and 13 February 2001, organized by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the United Nations, in which Alvaro Gil-Robles, the Council's Commissioner for Human Rights, and Gianni Buquicchio, Secretary of the Venice Commission, participated. The session presented the sides with the opportunity to argue their position on issues including statehood and self-determination in the presence of international legal experts, who offered clarifications based on the prevailing international legal doctrine and practice. The Council has declared its readiness to continue to facilitate such seminars in the future.

17. Members of the Joint Assessment Mission to the Gali district which was conducted from 20 to 24 November 2000 under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the Council of Europe and other international organizations, convened in Tbilisi on 24 September 2001 to discuss, together with representatives of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, possible ways to implement the recommendations set forth in the Mission report. The Council was particularly interested in the issue of language policy in the Gali schools, where there was a predominantly Georgian-speaking population. The Council of Europe has expressed its readiness to explore funding possibilities for the translation of textbooks into the Georgian language.

18. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Georgia continues to exchange views with representatives of the Council of Europe. On 3 December 2001, he met with Jean-Louis Laurens, Director of the Directorate of Strategic Planning, to exchange views on the situation and matters of mutual

concern, and to identify joint opportunities to further the cause of durable peace in Georgia. On 29 April 2002, Christa Lörcher, a German Member of Parliament and member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, visited the UNOMIG Tbilisi Office as part of her task of gathering information and reporting to the Assembly on the situation in Georgia and the consequences for the stability of the Caucasus region.

B. United Nations Office at Geneva

19. The United Nations Office at Geneva participated in the annual high-level and target-oriented tripartite meetings, convened by the Council of Europe in February 2002 in Strasbourg. Besides the original tripartite partners, namely the United Nations, the Council and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the process now informally includes the European Commission and others, referred to as "tripartite plus". The annual "tripartite plus" meetings early in 2003 will mark the tenth anniversary of this process. Plans for the anniversary meeting will take into account the Framework for Cooperation in Peace-building adopted at the Fourth High-Level Meeting on Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Organizations in February 2001 and the follow-up working-level meeting held from 30 April to 2 May 2002. In identifying themes for the 2003 target-oriented discussion, priority will be given to areas where the United Nations, the Council and other "tripartite plus" partners are working together in post-conflict situations.

20. The United Nations Office at Geneva and the Council of Europe maintain excellent bilateral relations and regular high-level contact through meetings between the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Secretary-General of the Council and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly. The two organizations share information on areas of mutual interest and exchange electronic data. The Council has been invited to participate in activities of the informal network linking the Geneva- and Turin-based United Nations research and training institutes.

C. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

21. Important steps forward were taken on cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Council of Europe during the year under review. The Council was a key participant in the International Conference on Human Rights and Democratization in Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, co-organized by OHCHR, the Government of Croatia and the European Commission, held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, from 8 to 10 October 2001. The Conference offered Governments, regional organizations, national institutions and representatives of civil society an opportunity to review developments in the field of human rights in Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus. The Council was represented at the Conference by its Secretary-General, who provided key input in the discussions and conference conclusions which, inter alia, encouraged OHCHR, the Council, and other regional organizations to enhance their cooperation in the fields of human rights and democratization.

22. High-level contacts continue between OHCHR and the Council of Europe. The Council's Commissioner for Human Rights and the Director of the Council's Directorate of Human Rights participated in the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights at Geneva. On 8 February 2002, the High Commissioner for Human Rights visited the Council in Strasbourg on the occasion of the annual tripartite meeting between the United Nations, the Council, OSCE and others. It was agreed then that each organization would include in its training curricula and materials information on standards and procedures of both the European and universal human rights systems. This issue had also been discussed at a workshop on human rights manuals co-organized by OHCHR and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, with the participation of the Council, in Lund, Sweden, in December 2001.

23. Working-level consultations on human rights issues have continued between the two organizations. The Council of Europe remains a key regional partner in the follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, and organized a follow-up meeting in Strasbourg on 27 and 28 February 2002. At that time, member States of the Council also discussed

implementation of the conclusions of the European and world conferences against racism. The Council indicated that it would act to mainstream the results of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the outcome of the European Conference into its activities and produce a paper summarizing its main activities in this field. Future cooperation is expected to include the continued sharing of information and the participation of the Council in activities undertaken by the Anti-Discrimination Unit of OHCHR.

24. OHCHR and the Council of Europe are cooperating on a regional strategy against trafficking in human beings and on the issue of national human rights institutions. The two organizations are working together in the Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings and the Gender Task Force of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. On 9 April 2002, the Council and OHCHR co-sponsored a panel discussion entitled "Combating Trafficking in Human Beings — A European Convention?" on the occasion of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights at Geneva. In the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, for example, OHCHR joined the Council and OSCE in providing advice to Yugoslav authorities on establishing a national institution that conforms to the Paris Principles.

25. OHCHR and the Council of Europe have worked together on the issue of human rights and terrorism. On 29 November 2001, the two organizations, together with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of OSCE, issued a joint statement calling on Governments to ensure respect for human rights even as they take strong measures to prevent further recurrences of terrorism. OHCHR sent expert representatives to participate in the deliberations of the Group of Specialists on Human Rights and the Fight against Terrorism, established by the Council to draft guidelines for its member States on ensuring that anti-terrorism measures conform to international human rights standards.

26. On 3 May 2002, the High Commissioner for Human Rights participated in the one hundred tenth session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Vilnius, and addressed some issues of common concern, including the question of human rights and anti-terrorism. She, and her Council counterpart, Mr. Gil-Robles, discussed ways to strengthen cooperation between the two offices. OHCHR and the Council have agreed to hold working-level consultations at Geneva and Strasbourg twice a year, reflecting a strengthened partnership and recognition of the benefits such cooperation can bring to each organization.

D. Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention

27. The Council of Europe and the Centre for International Crime Prevention continue to share common interests in combating transnational organized crime, trafficking, corruption and terrorism in Europe. The first inter-agency meeting on cooperation on and the coordination of anti-corruption activities was held at Vienna in February 2002, in order to enhance information sharing, cooperation and coordination in delivery of assistance. Future inter-agency meetings will focus on the coordination of anti-corruption strategic action plans.

28. The Council of Europe was involved in the negotiations of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto as well as in the ongoing negotiations regarding the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The Council participated in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Corruption, held at Vienna from 21 January to 1 February 2002.

29. Cooperation between the Centre and the Council of Europe has been effective, but could be strengthened further through information sharing, cooperation and better coordination. Possible areas for strengthening cooperation, information and expertise sharing between the two organizations have been identified to include: the European Committee on Crime Problems; the Group of Specialists on criminal law and criminological aspects of organized crime, set up by the European Committee to write reports on trends of organized criminal groups operating in Europe and to prepare "best practices" studies on organized crime; the Multi-disciplinary Group on International Action against Terrorism; Group of States against corruption; the European Committee on Legal Cooperation; and the Group against organized crime.

30. Since both the Centre and the Council of Europe receive requests from various European countries for technical assistance on organized crime, corruption, terrorism and trafficking, a mechanism for information

sharing on these requests could also help to avoid duplication. This mechanism would further strengthen cooperation between the two organizations, ensure the efficient use of resources and the coordination of efforts, as well as reinforce the focused nature of field activities.

31. Since its inception in 1997, the Global Programme against Money Laundering has been working closely with the Council of Europe secretariat in carrying out joint anti-money-laundering technical assistance activities in Eastern Europe. The Programme regularly participates in plenary meetings and money-laundering typology exercises of the Select Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures. This Committee was created by the secretariat under the Combating Economic Crime Unit of the Directorate General for Legal Affairs to ensure the harmonization of legal, financial and penal provisions in the Council of Europe member States which are not members of the Financial Action Task Force.

32. The Council of Europe is also one of the seven international organizations comprising the Advisory Group of the International Money Laundering Information Network, a common anti-money-laundering web site and database administered by the Global Programme against Money Laundering, through which essential information is gathered, exchanged and analysed for the benefit of all national and international anti-money-laundering agencies. The Programme and the Council's Select Committee of Experts are also members of a group that meets regularly under the auspices of the World Bank to coordinate technical assistance in anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism.

33. The secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board and the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe have been cooperating since the late 1980s, mainly in the area of the control of illicit movements of psychotropic substances. The cooperation between the Control Board and the Governments forming the Pompidou Group facilitated the implementation in Europe of the control provisions of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Pursuant to the recommendations of the three joint Control Board and Pompidou Group conferences in 1993, 1995 and 1998 on the control of psychotropic substances in Europe, technical meetings of experts have been held on the subjects of the control of intermediaries in international trade in psychotropic substances and precursors (1995), diagnosis and treatment with stimulants of attention deficit disorder (1999) and control of benzodiazepines (2001).

E. United Nations Development Programme

34. The Council of Europe, the United States Agency for International Development, the World Bank, the Open Society Institute and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), have been working together to develop the Local Government Information Network project. The aim of the project is to facilitate information sharing among local governments and related organizations within Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and to improve the effectiveness of Government at the local level.

35. The Council of Europe Development Bank has provided two grants to the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In 1998, the sum of 1 million euros was given to help to mitigate the impact of the crisis in Kosovo. In April 2001, the Development Bank again pledged another 1 million euros in the context of the humanitarian crisis resulting from the armed conflicts. UNDP was requested by the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to administer these two grants in support of the following two initiatives: (a) communal water infrastructure improvement of the municipalities of Vizbegovo and Suto; and (b) immediate community rehabilitation support. In the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, UNDP is cooperating with the Council in the area of judiciary reform at the policy level.

F. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

36. Since 1996, when the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) established a Liaison Office to the European Institutions in Strasbourg, cooperation with the Council of Europe has developed into a comprehensive partnership, focusing on the development of legal standards, the raising of awareness of human rights and the strengthening of civil societies as these relate to persons of concern to UNHCR. Relations between the two organizations have evolved significantly over the

last six years as the Council's unique and nearly complete pan-European membership coincides with the continued operational involvement of UNHCR in the refugee and displaced population problems of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

37. Through the promotion of democratic stability, the protection of human rights and the monitoring of its member States' commitments, the Council of Europe also contributes to the mandate of UNHCR by fostering an environment conducive to improving the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers and, in the longer term, to enhancing the stability of Europe and preventing further population displacements. The complementarity of their mandates was given new impetus in 1999 when UNHCR and the Council signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation. This cooperation framework seeks to maximize the specificities of each organization by encouraging a mutually reinforcing partnership in areas of common interest, notably through reciprocal representation at relevant working meetings and the implementation of joint cooperation activities where appropriate.

38. There are regular high-level visits between UNHCR and the secretariat of the Council of Europe. The High Commissioner for Refugees met the Council's Secretary-General during his visit to Strasbourg and addressed the Parliamentary Assembly on 27 June 2001. In February 2002, the Assistant High Commissioner attended the annual high-level "tripartite-plus" meeting hosted by the Council in Strasbourg. Consultation and coordination on the development of integrated strategies and action plans are increasingly taking place, together with other relevant partners. Field-based offices of both organizations regularly consult and share information.

39. The specificity and comparative advantage of each organization's mandate or expertise have enhanced joint cooperation. For UNHCR, one of the most significant aspects of this cooperation is the drafting of legal standards related to asylum and to the treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as the development of national citizenship legislation and of civil society (non-governmental organizations).

40. UNHCR enjoys observer status at and actively participates in all meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on the Legal Aspects of Refugees, the European Committee on Migration and the Committee of Experts on Nationality. Over the last year, UNHCR has participated in the drafting of recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on family reunion and the detention of asylum-seekers, which were adopted in March and April 2002 respectively. The 2002-2003 work programme of the Ad Hoc Committee, in which UNHCR continues to take a very active role, includes a recommendation on membership of a particular social group. UNHCR also addressed the second European Conference on Nationality, held in Strasbourg on 8 and 9 October 2001.

41. The Specialist Group on Roma is a technical body of the European Committee on Migration to which UNHCR devotes particular attention, since a large number of refugees and displaced persons in South-Eastern Europe are of Roma origin. Aside from actively participating in Committee meetings which focus on the development of institutions and national strategies, a number of joint concrete activities are also undertaken at the field level. With regard to Stability Pact initiatives, UNHCR and the Council of Europe Development Bank continue to explore modalities of concrete cooperation to support the implementation of solutions for refugees and displaced persons in that region.

42. UNHCR and the Council of Europe continue to elaborate and implement annually a joint programme of technical assistance in selected member States on a variety of thematic issues. Themes addressed in these workshops or seminars include the development and implementation of citizenship laws and the avoidance of statelessness (Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro in 2002); legislation concerning foreigners (Moldova in 2001); border management and the treatment of asylum-seekers (Armenia in 2002); and the development and implementation of legislation on non-governmental organizations (Azerbaijan in 2001 and 2002).

43. In the region of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Council of Europe has formally joined UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and OSCE as co-lead agency in this thematic framework with a focus on citizenship and statelessness, as well as on the legal framework for non-governmental organizations. These agencies are currently exploring the possibility of holding a high-level review meeting on refugees, migration and security in autumn 2002.

44. UNHCR collaborates with a number of the committees of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and especially with the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography. UNHCR field offices assist the visits of the Committee's rapporteurs, as was the case for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro in April 2002. UNHCR participates as observer in Committee meetings and shares information and observations with regard to draft reports and recommendations, as was the case for the report and recommendation on UNHCR and the fiftieth anniversary of the Geneva Convention which was adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly on 27 June 2001. The recommendation, inter alia, reaffirms the member States' commitment to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Since June 2001, two additional member States of the Council (Ukraine and Moldova) have acceded to this human rights instrument.

45. As the broader regional human rights instrument, the European Convention on Human Rights constitutes a useful complement to the international instruments specifically related to the protection of refugees. It also establishes an enforcement mechanism for its implementation — the European Court of Human Rights — whose jurisprudence can complement international refugee law. UNHCR cooperates with the Court through the sharing of information, particularly concerning UNHCR public protection guidelines related to specific refugee or displacement situations.

46. UNHCR and the Council of Europe's Directorate of Human Rights have jointly conducted national workshops on the European Convention on Human Rights and its relevance to the protection of refugees, displaced persons and asylum-seekers in selected countries. Such events are planned for Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine in 2002.

G. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

47. The Council of Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) maintain fruitful cooperation and coordinate activities in the fields of education, science, culture and communication. Committees of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council have also cooperated with UNESCO.

48. UNESCO has been cooperating, through the Council of Europe, in the field of academic mobility and the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in the European region. This cooperation has involved merging the two networks of national information centres for mobility and recognition, previously administered separately by each organization, into a joint entity, known as the European Network of Information Centres.

49. The Council of Europe cooperated with UNESCO in the framework of the Stability Pact Task Force "Education and Youth" and in implementing the Technical Cooperation and Consultancy Programme in south-east Kosovo. Both institutions cooperated in connection with the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010. The Council of Europe plans to further enhance this cooperation through the new project of the Higher Education and Research Committee, "University as a Site of Citizenship".

50. UNESCO and the Council of Europe cooperated with the secretariat of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee. The Committee, at its second meeting, adopted the Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications and the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (Riga, 6 June 2001). A joint Council of Europe and UNESCO exploratory mission on education for democratic citizenship was organized in July 2001 in Serbia. It was followed up by a consultation seminar of practitioners of education for democratic citizenship in December 2002, also in Serbia.

51. Pursuant to the recommendation of the European Forum of Young Scientists on 28 September 2001, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted its Recommendation 1541 (2001) on Young Scientists in Europe.

52. The Council of Europe is involved in the activities undertaken by UNESCO in the field of bioethics, in particular in the work of the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO. At the eighth session, held in Paris from 12 to 14 September 2001, the Council representative was given the opportunity to present the Council's strategy and activities in bioethics. UNESCO, for its part, regularly attends the meetings of the Council's Steering Committee on

Bioethics and the European Conference of National Ethics Committees.

53. Cooperation was established between the Council of Europe and UNESCO in connection with the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations (2001). Last November, the Conference on cultural industries and new information technologies was organized in cooperation with UNESCO in Strasbourg. Both the Secretary-General of the Council and the Director-General of UNESCO participated in the Conference.

H. United Nations Environment Programme

54. Over the years, the Council of Europe and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have cooperated in the field of nature protection and biodiversity conservation. The cooperation between these organizations was significantly enhanced after the Third Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", held in Sofia in 1995, when the ministers of environment of 53 countries endorsed the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and invited the Council of Europe and UNEP to set up appropriate structures for its implementation. Pursuant to an agreement of cooperation signed in 1996 providing the basis for establishing a Council of the Strategy and an Executive Bureau, the two organizations have jointly hosted the secretariat for the Strategy and provided its Coordinator on a rotational basis. The current Coordinator of the joint secretariat is being provided by UNEP and after the Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", to be held in Kiev in May 2003, this position will revert to the Council of Europe.

55. The Strategy is a regional forum for promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Europe, based on the approach of relevant multilateral environmental agreements while maintaining regional priorities set by the "Environment for Europe" process. The overall objective of the Strategy is to raise the political profile of and facilitate concrete action for the conservation of biodiversity and landscape in Europe.

I. International Labour Office

56. In accordance with the supervisory procedure established under article 74 (4) of the European Code of Social Security and the arrangements made between the International Labour Office (ILO) and the Council of Europe, ILO, through its Committee of Experts, participates regularly in the supervision of the application of the European Code of Social Security and the Protocol thereto. The reason for this rare example of international cooperation is that the European Code of Social Security is based on the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102). Under this supervisory mandate, ILO functions also as a member of the Council's European Committee of Experts on Standard-Setting Instruments. In addition, ILO is an active observer in the European Committee for Social Cohesion.

57. Since September 2000, ILO has been involved in the Council of Europe's programme of assistance on European standard-setting instruments in Central and Eastern European member and observer States, in the framework of the Council's activities for the development and consolidation of democratic stability. The programme assists national authorities in examining the conformity of their current and planned social security legislation with the European Code of Social Security and the Protocol thereto, and more broadly in defining a national social security framework compatible with European standards. One of the main activities of ILO within this programme is the assessment and presentation of the resulting conclusions on the compatibility of the national social security legislation of these countries with the provisions of the Code and the Protocol. The conclusions produced are used to assess the ratification prospects of the Code by the countries concerned, check the orientation of their current reforms and modify their legislation and practice in line with international standards.

58. The collaboration between ILO and the Council of Europe resulted in Moldova's signing the European Convention on Social Security at the eighth conference of European Ministers responsible for social security, held in Bratislava in May 2002. Romania has also signed the European Code of Social Security. The Government of Lithuania has indicated that it will sign the Code in the near future. The Government of Ukraine has indicated that it is in the process of implementing the provisions of the European Code of Social Security and the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102). ILO played an active role during the Bratislava conference of

ministers, which was devoted to analysing the implications of labour migration for social security systems in European countries. One outcome of the Conference is that the Council of Europe and ILO have agreed to strengthen collaboration between the ILO social protection sector and the European Committee for Social Cohesion on these issues and on those related to poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

59. ILO organized a course held in Budapest in March 2002 for Central and East European countries on the statistical data required for the report form of the European Code of Social Security and to explain more generally the reporting obligations entailed by the Code and the statistical conditions proving compliance with its requirements. Joint ILO and Council of Europe seminars on the Code and minimum standards of social security were organized in 2001 for the Baltic States, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

60. ILO and the Council of Europe are the principal organizations involved in the formulation and execution of social security activities for the Initiative for Social Cohesion of the Stability Pact. A joint proposal for a three-year project has been developed in the region, in which the two organizations would collaborate in several areas, including the promotion of standards and strengthening of the delivery of social services. The two organizations are also working together on planning a pension conference for South-East Europe, to be held in Ljubljana in September 2002 under the auspices of the Initiative.

61. ILO has been participating in sessions of the European Committee of Social Rights, in an advisory capacity. It has participated in technical meetings of the Council of Europe concerning, inter alia, disabled persons, ethical issues, employment for marginalized groups and training in social security, in meetings of the Council's Committee of Experts on Integration and Community Relations and in those of the Forum on Children and Families.

J. World Health Organization

62. The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, supported by the WHO Office at the European Union, has been promoting tripartite cooperation in the field of health with the Council of Europe and the European Commission, particularly in collaboration with committees and working groups that are active in the fields of public health, social cohesion and bioethics. This tripartite cooperation led to the setting-up of a Network of Health-Promoting Schools, run jointly by these three organizations with a single technical secretariat headed by WHO in Copenhagen. Thanks to this integrational initiative, today the Network has 41 member States benefiting from health education in their schools.

63. The WHO Regional Office for Europe is now represented systematically at the European Public Health Committee. It participated in the Health Ministers' Forum: Health Development and Action for South-East Europe in the Twenty-First Century, held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in August 2001, to strengthen the international partnership for health actions in the region of South-East Europe. WHO and the Council of Europe are the two major partners in the social cohesion initiative of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, inaugurated in July 1999.

64. WHO experts are also participating in the committee on the impact of information technologies on health care and the committee on health and the media. The participation of WHO in the Council of Europe steering committee on health helps to identify concerns and possible action. This bilateral cooperation is of particular interest since both WHO and its Regional Office for Europe and the Council of Europe share some member States that are neither part of the European Union nor candidate countries.

65. The joint Council of Europe and WHO Regional Office for Europe action in 2001 resulted in the establishment of the South-East Europe Health Network for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania and Yugoslavia. Based on the countries' review on access to health for vulnerable populations in the region, the ministers of health of the seven South-East Europe member States reached an unprecedented political agreement for cooperation and concerted action for health development in the region.

66. The international community, in particular the Governments of Greece, France, Italy and Switzerland, the Council of Europe Development Bank, the Council of Europe and the WHO Regional Office for Europe, has pledged both technical and financial support (amounting altogether up to 4 million euros) for four of the seven projects involving regional cooperation,

namely, "enhancing social cohesion by strengthening community mental health services in South-East Europe"; "strengthening the surveillance and control of communicable diseases in South-East Europe"; "strengthening the food safety and nutrition services to secure access to safe and affordable food in South-East Europe"; and "capacity-building for access to high-quality health services in South-East Europe". Two of the projects are already in the implementation phase and the other two are in the final stage of preparation.

67. To further support the developments in the region, to provide a forum for the seven South-East Europe countries for collaboration and to keep health high on the political agenda of the Stability Pact, the Council of Europe is continuing its support to the South-East Europe Health Network for 2002-2003 by launching the Multicountry Public Health Initiative "Health Development Action in SEE". At its fourth meeting in Hilleroed, Denmark, from 26 to 28 May 2002, the Health Network endorsed 12 founding principles for collaboration, the most important of which ones were the partnership approach, the full ownership of action of the South-East Europe countries, sustainability, complementarity, continuity, transparency and accountability.

IV. Observations

68. The longstanding cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe has continued to improve at all levels since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 56/43. An added value has been brought to the cooperation between the two organizations in the context of the impetus given to the relations between the United Nations and regional organizations.

69. Given a wide array of shared interests, the two organizations have made concerted efforts aimed at a balanced and equitable division of responsibilities, as well as taking cognizance of the areas in which one organization might have a comparative advantage and, hence, is better situated to take the lead role. This shared commonality of interest includes but is not limited to cooperation in such areas as conflict prevention, post-conflict peace-building and other confidence-building measures aimed at increasing tolerance and understanding between people belonging to different ethnic groups, especially those within countries in crisis. In the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks, there has been a keen focus on anti-terrorism efforts, while ensuring that human rights and humanitarian laws are respected at all times.

70. I believe the overall level of cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe is most satisfactory and remain optimistic about the prospects of an even deeper and more seamless cooperation in many areas in the future. In order to report more fully on concrete cooperation measures, I believe that I should report to the General Assembly on such cooperation every other year. I therefore recommend that my next report to the Assembly on this subject be submitted at its fifty-ninth session. Accordingly, the Assembly may wish to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-ninth session the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe".